U.N. Chief Picks a Very Rich New Yorker (Not Named Trump) for Climate Job

The New York Times

March 7, 2018 23:25 EST

Copyright 2018 The New York Times Company All Rights Reserved

Section: CLIMATE

Length: 669 words

Byline: Somini Sengupta

Highlight: António Guterres has appointed Michael R. Bloomberg, the former New York mayor, to be his special envoy for climate action.

Body

Want the latest climate news in your inbox? You can sign up here to receive Climate Fwd:, our new email newsletter.

The United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, on Monday appointed a billionaire politician from New York to be his special envoy for climate action. It amounted to a finger in the eye of another New York billionaire: the one who occupies the White House and who has dismissed the fact of climate change.

The appointment of Michael R. Bloomberg, a former mayor of New York City who is a prominent advocate in the fight against climate change, to the United Nations post comes a year ahead of a summit meeting on global warming that the secretary general is planning.

“The world has those that follow and those that lead. And those that lead, some lead in the wrong direction and some lead in the right direction,” Mr. Guterres said at a news conference Monday at United Nations headquarters. “You are of those that lead and have always led in the right direction,” he told Mr. Bloomberg, “and it is an enormous privilege for me to be able to work so closely with you.”

In a statement, Mr. Guterres said he had asked Mr. Bloomberg to help him encourage governments and private businesses to rapidly reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases to meet the targets of the Paris climate accord.

“The Secretary General and Michael Bloomberg share the perspective that the emissions gap needs to be closed soon to limit global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius,” Mr. Guterres’s office said in a statement.

President Trump has said the United States will pull out of the Paris climate agreement. He has rolled back a host of regulations to protect the environment, appointed climate science deniers to key posts in the administration and championed the use of fossil fuels, defying the scientific consensus that emissions from those fuels are a major cause of global warming.

On the campaign trail, Mr. Trump described climate change as a “hoax.”

Mr. Bloomberg, who was mayor of New York City from 2002 to 2013, has teamed up with one of Mr. Trump’s most outspoken critics, Gov. Jerry Brown of California, to press cities and states to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions to help the United States meet its Paris agreement targets.

“For the United States to reach its commitment, much more needs to be done,” the two wrote in an opinion article published in The New York Times. “But the world should know: We are not waiting for Washington.”

Mr. Bloomberg has given tens of millions of dollars to environmental groups fighting coal-fired power plants. In 2014, Ban Ki-moon, who was United Nations secretary general at the time, appointed him special envoy for cities and climate change.

“Around the world, bottom-up solutions are leading the fight against climate change,” Mr. Bloomberg said in a Twitter post. “As the new @UN Special Envoy for Climate Action, I’ll work with state and non-state actors to help implement policies that reduce emissions & build resilience.”

Mr. Guterres on Monday did not mention the Trump administration, but criticism was implicit in his remarks. How society reacts, he said, will make the difference in winning what he called “the battle against climate change.”

“Governments are important, of course, because they can slow down this process, but the essential is the way societies as a whole react, and that is what Michael Bloomberg is leading in an exemplary way,” the secretary general said.

Mr. Guterres has described Mr. Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris deal as “a major disappointment.” The United States is the only country in the world to have announced its intention to withdraw.

PHOTO: Michael R. Bloomberg, left, with Secretary General António Guterres at United Nations headquarters on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kena Betancur/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Related Articles

- A Shadow Delegation Stalks the Official U.S. Team at Climate Talks
- Bucking Trump, These Cities, States and Companies Commit to Paris Accord

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: News

Publication-Type: Web Blog

Subject: APPOINTMENTS (91%); CLIMATE ACTION (91%); UNITED NATIONS (91%); CLIMATE CHANGE (90%); EMISSIONS (90%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (90%); INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (90%); UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS (90%); WEALTHY PEOPLE (90%); AGREEMENTS (89%); CITY GOVERNMENT (89%); CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATION & POLICY (89%); CLIMATOLOGY (89%); ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION & POLICY (89%); GLOBAL WARMING (89%); GREENHOUSE GASES (89%); EARTH & ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE (79%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (79%); CITIES (78%); ELECTIONS & POLITICS (78%); ENVIRONMENTAL & WILDLIFE ORGANIZATIONS (78%); POLLUTION MONITORING, PREVENTION & REMEDIATION (78%); PRESS CONFERENCES (78%); TALKS & MEETINGS (78%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (73%); CONSERVATION (73%); ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES & AGREEMENTS (73%); Global Warming (%); Bloomberg, Michael R (%); Guterres, Antonio (%); United Nations (%); Environment (%); Greenhouse Gas Emissions (%); Carbon Dioxide (%); Brown, Edmund G Jr (%); Trump, Donald J (%); United States Politics and Government (%); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (%)

Industry: EMISSIONS (90%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (89%); GLOBAL WARMING (89%); ELECTRONIC

PUBLISHING (78%); UTILITIES INDUSTRY (78%); COAL FIRED PLANTS (73%); FOSSIL FUEL POWER PLANTS (67%); FOSSIL FUELS (67%); ELECTRIC POWER PLANTS (60%)

Person: ANTONIO GUTERRES (92%); MICHAEL BLOOMBERG (91%); DONALD TRUMP (89%); JERRY BROWN (79%); BAN KI-MOON (58%); Bloomberg, Michael R; Guterres, Antonio; Brown, Edmund G Jr; Trump, Donald J

Geographic: NEW YORK, NY, USA (91%); NEW YORK, USA (95%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (94%)

Load-Date: March 7, 2018

End of Document